

Catholic Theatre

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION
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Catholic Theatre Conference

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Therese Marie Cuny

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Sister M. Angelita B.V.M.

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SR. JOSEPH LEONA
YORK CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL
459 W. KING ST.
YORK.
PENNSYLVANIA

1954 ANNUAL IN PREPARATION

How many times have you thought that your Dramatic Club was not receiving sufficient publicity? How many times have you said that you would like to see what other groups are doing in the dramatic field? How many times have you wished to show others what you were doing?

Early in the year we informed our readers that the Theatre Annual would again be a feature of this year's program. Under the capable direction of Father C. Herbst, C.M., the Annual is well beyond the planning stage and waiting only for the pictorial and written material from members.

In order to make the Annual attractive, interesting and informative, it will be necessary to have the co-operation of the entire membership.

Each group is asked:

- 1) TO SUBMIT AN ARTICLE EMBRACING ONE OF THE IDEAS BELOW
 - (a) relating the activities of the past season and plans for the future,
 - (b) explaining some aspect of your production schedule; a problem met and solved,
 - (c) a novel or interesting approach to one of your plays,
 - (d) a new adaptation or some other information which you feel may be interesting to other members.

This article should not exceed 200 words.

- 2) TO SUBMIT A GLOSS PRINT OF ONE OF YOUR PRODUCTIONS

A cut will be made from this gloss print for which there will be a charge of \$5.00. We suggest photos that are approximately 4 x 5.

Since variety is interesting, one need not hold to these measurements exactly. However, a larger cut will obviously necessitate a larger fee.

Any additional photos that have merit will be considered for use, but the group will be asked to assume the additional expense entailed.

Each group is strongly urged to send in a photo which will illustrate the highest calibre of work.

The editor of the bulletin reserves the right to reject any photos which will not measure up to the standards which the Conference has established in previous Annuals.

On the back of each photo, print clearly

- a) name of the organization
- b) name of the play
- c) name of the director
- d) name of the scenic designer

Groups that have given plays honoring the Marian Year are asked to submit an additional article giving pertinent facts. We also ask for pictures of these productions.

Those who are engaged in Childrens' Theatre may submit an additional article on that phase of activity, stressing aims and modes of presentation.

The Annual will be sold for \$1.00 a copy. Needless to say, this charge will not begin to cover the expense of publication and mailing. We are asking members to secure advertisements which will help to defray expenses. The rates for advertising are:

Full Page	\$100.00
1/2 Page	55.00
1/3 Page	35.00
1/4 Page	30.00
1/6 Page	20.00
1/12 Page	10.00

Here is an opportunity to help in a very real way.

You can offer assistance in securing either an advertisement or sending the names of prospective advertisers to Father Herbst. You will also be offering a real service to advertisers for we have found, through the past two years of accepting advertisements in our Production Calendar, that it has brought interest and sales in the products advertised. Our Catholic Theatre members, it seems, really patronize our advertisers; they don't just talk about it!

(Continued on page 10)

A NOTE ON APPLAUSE

Hugh Dickinson
Loyola University
Chicago, Ill.

Mr. Dickinson's name is not a new one in these columns. He has generously contributed of his experience and enthusiasm on several occasions. His precision and deftness in painting mood as a director, his scholarly approach in the analysis of a play, give a very real and significant value to his writings on Theatre.

"This is a religious play, please do not applaud."

I was startled, recently, to read that notice in the playbill of a Catholic community theatre group. To me, it is a new view of theatrical etiquette, and I wonder if it is widespread. If so, it needs to be examined critically, for it seems to imply not merely an ignorance of audience psychology; but, more importantly, an essential confusion as to the true nature and function of theatre, whether we call it Catholic or not. And I am convinced that we can in no way further the cause of theatre by subscribing to such confusion.

Poor audience psychology to forbid applause in the theatre? Yes, because applause is approval — not appropriate in church, but always appropriate in the theatre. If people like a thing, they will wish to show that liking; and what other way has an audience, collectively, of showing its gratitude? Furthermore, applause serves to relieve an audience of the emotional tensions the play was designed to evoke, and thus to relax it and help it return to the world of everyday life. Besides, I suspect people not only applaud what they like, they also like a thing more because they have applauded it! What theatre-worker would wish to change that?

It's psychologically bad, too, for the actors and the production staff. If they are conscientious workers, they will wish to know whether they have done well or poorly, and applause is one way — though only one — for them to know. The theatre group with which I work has done Fry's *Thor With Angels*, Sierra's *The Kingdom of God*, and Ghelderode's *Barabbas* — all religious plays; and no spectator hesitated for an instant to applaud because of the subject matter of the plays. When we did the last play, it is true, the student who played the role of Christ did not take a curtain call in his make-up for that part: I felt that the religious associations in the audience's minds would inhibit their applause of his performance. Fortunately, however, he had also doubled as an apostle. So he could take his curtain-call in make-up along with the rest! If actors and technicians have put on a *show*, they deserve public acknowledgment for work well done. The technique of the theatre is to woo and win an audience to adopt the attitudes and emotions, reverent or otherwise,

which the play requires; not to try to impose them by fiat — and in a program note, at that.

A theatre is not a church, and an audience is not a congregation. That is to say, it has not come to worship, but to be entertained. This distinction obtains — and should be kept constantly in mind, no matter how religious the theme and subject matter of the play being presented. It obtains, moreover, even when the theatre actually is in the church building, as is often the case with parish entertainments held in the basement or other church rooms assigned for the purpose. There, we think nothing of applauding a play, a song, or a Holy Name Society address, or of laughing at a bingo game, even though they all take place on the church premises. The wall that divides the church from the social hall also marks the distinction between a religious service and an entertainment.

But what of religious plays written for presentation in church, such as Christopher Fry's *A Sleep of Prisoners*, or T. S. Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral*? Do these confuse the distinction I hold to be true and important? Superficially, yes. But not because they are plays, but because they are presented in church. Actually, they prove the distinction, rather than confuse it. I cannot cite Fry's play in evidence, since he decided at the outset (arbitrarily, as I think) that it should be presented only in a church. But let us take *Murder in the Cathedral*, which was originally written for the Canterbury Festival but first presented in church at Hobart College, Geneva, N.Y. Whether the audience at Hobart applauded, I do not know. If not, it would only be natural for the church locale and the church-going habits of the audience to inhibit applause. Yet when the play was presented at the Old Vic last year, London audiences applauded loud and long. Why? Obviously, because they were spectators, not members of a congregation — in a theatre, not a church — witnessing a play, not participating in a religious service. And I dare say, if Fry's play were to be given in a theatre, the audience reaction would be the same as that at the Old Vic: spontaneous, uninhibited applause.

So we are left with this fundamental question: Was the play — as a *play* — any more religious for having been presented in a church? Or, to put it another way: Was the play — as a *play* — one whit less religious for having been presented in a theatre? To my mind, the honest answer must be: No. If theatre is important to us, it must be so as *theatre*. It can achieve its effects, its proper ends, only as *theatre*. If the subject matter of a play is religious, if its theme is spiritual, if the audience emotion evoked is exaltation or reverence, it still does not alter the case. The play does not thereby cease to be theatre and become a sacramental or a religious service.

So I say: while the curtain is up, achieve as spiritual an atmosphere as you can, if that is what is called for. But when the curtain falls, and the audience finds itself once more in the theatre, it will wish to react as an audience. It will wish to applaud. For heaven's sake, let it!

THE PLAY FESTIVAL

Sister Margaret Mary, I.H.M.

St. Mary Academy, Monroe, Michigan

When people discover a truly enjoyable experience, they like to share that experience with others. This is how we, at St. Mary's, feel about our annual Play Festival. We wish to share its fun with other students and directors.

What is it? Defining it, though not in Webster's words, we would say it is the presentation of six short plays or cuttings within a period of three weeks. The one differentiating mark of our Festival is the fact that it is entirely student-selected, student-directed and student-produced. Like homework, it belongs to the students alone.

Here are some of the reasons why the event has had such popularity with the school for the past seven years: The students have practical experience in play production. Six Seniors who have taken dramatics throughout high school, assisted by a fellow-Senior as consultant, assume the responsibility of the Festival. Basing their choice of a play upon the general theme previously decided by the entire group, they go in search of titles in Catholic Theatre Conference Bulletins and Production Calendars, High School Programs of other schools and Play Catalogues. Some Moderators might feel this is a dangerous freedom, but the Youth of today are eager for "the play with a challenge" and are desirous of using the drama as a "means to the end" of developing a cultured and well-integrated personality if given the opportunity to do it.

Naturally, the casting poses a definite problem. The directors do not want to offend their best friends by refusing them a part, but sad experience and tradition passed on from one class to the next bids them keep in mind, "the play's the thing."

Out of consideration for each other, the group plans a schedule in advance, each adhering strictly to the time and place designated. To assist the new director, a gradation of duties is foisted upon her one at a time: reading with cast, blocking, sound effects, stage setting, lighting effects, costuming, make-up, programs, publicity and house committee. A chairman is appointed for each department and a specific set of instructions is given her for which she is responsible.

Responsibility! Yes, the festival is valuable to the students because it develops this sense. It is up to them whether or not "the show goes on." Such expressions as:

"No, that costume is not authentic";
"This is not the furniture used in that period";
"Your timing is not good";
"Introduce a different bit of business there";
"You're overacting; be sincere";
"Don't shout a 'stage whisper'" —

all these and similar ones are music to a Moderator's ear.

(Continued on page 10)

"JUST BETWEEN US"

The activities of high schools and colleges are interesting but not to the extent that they are given so much prominence in the monthly Calendar. Could we have fewer news items and more articles like those of Miss Hamm and Mr. Robert Johnston? These are so worth-while.

Sister M. R.

* * *

Congratulations on the many interesting features that mark the Production Calendar. Each issue seems better than the last. Our students too, have been more than a little enthusiastic about it and we find ourselves looking forward to each new issue.

I would however, like to venture a criticism. This is the Marian year. Certainly we should have something to offer audiences instead of plays that have been done for a good many years. Our theatres should stress creativeness, progress, and experiment. What is being done to promote new plays? Is it possible that we must let this important year pass without some special play or plays being written and produced in honor of Our Mother? Where are our Catholic playwrights? I would like to hear how others feel about this!

Puzzled

* * *

Editor's Note: Playwrights must be trained. They aren't born with pen in hand. It would be interesting to learn from the colleges and universities just what courses are being offered to help in this great need. We are aware, of course that some are making great efforts and achieving worth-while results, too.

* * *

Among our large membership, is there someone who can tell me where I can procure a copy of the one-act play BRIGHT MOONS? I think the author is Farlin or Farling. I shall appreciate any lead on this.

M. L. E.

Tel.: PLaza 7-3730-1-2-3

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FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK . . .

This is the year dedicated to Mary throughout the world. Evidence of this dedication has been great even though the year has barely started. This year's Annual of CATHOLIC THEATRE will be our means of dedication. Our Catholic stages have, singly, offered tribute to Mary. Now we are, through this project, making it a joint tribute — like so many beads strung together as a rosary of prayer.

Not only do we make this an act of reverence but the CATHOLIC THEATRE Annual should act as a firm foundation for greater activity and stronger ties among Catholic groups. It is one of our greatest means of letting people know what we are doing. This is an appeal then, to motivate our action as a group.

Projects of this type call for real work in planning, preparation, and completion of the task. We do not ask you to share in this work. We do not ask for any monetary assistance. We ask only that you cooperate to the best of your ability — to the extent that you believe a real Catholic-Action minded member should. Will you . . . for Mary?

FESTIVAL NEWS

Not one of the largest, but certainly one of the most enthusiastic of Diocesan Festivals was held at McDonnell Memorial High School in Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin on February 27th. Sister M. Susan, S.S.N.D. was the chairman. Medals were presented to the best of each cast and trophies to the three outstanding actors of the Festival. The plays, judged by Therese Marie Cuny were:

DUST OF THE ROAD — Columbus High School, Director, Marcella A. Hoerl

THE TAMING OF THE SHREW — McDonnell High School, Director, Sister M. Susan, S.S.N.D.

BOX AND COX — Regis High School, Director, Sister M. Janet, O.S.B.

THE MARRIAGE OF ST. FRANCIS (Gheon) — St. Joseph Academy, Director, Sister Marietta, S.S.J.

THE TELL TALE HEART — Champion High School, Director, Rev. C. I. Prendergast, S.J.

MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM — Holy Cross Seminary, Director, Father Albert I. Thomas

THE VALIANT — Madonna High School, Director, Sister Ronald

A SUNNY MORNING — Aquinas High School, Director, Sister M. Theodata, F.S.P.A.

THE HAPPY JOURNEY — Newman High School, Director, Sister Mary Job, O.P.

CENTRAL REGION

The Board of Directors is happy to announce that Sister Thomas More, O.P. of Edgewood College (Madison, Wisconsin) has been appointed the chairman of the Central Region. Sister brings to this important post a wealth of experience, a very real understanding of the needs and possibilities of this region, and an interest and enthusiasm that is well known to all in the Conference.

Sister will assume chairmanship in April and directors of the region will be hearing from her shortly after that date.

Central region has been blessed with a large share of eager and generous member-groups. We know that they will enthusiastically cooperate with any new plans.

Our best wishes, Sister Thomas More, and our prayers as you generously undertake guidance and direction of Central region!

LEADS MOBILE AREA

Sister Mary Immaculate, chairman of the Southern Region sends word that the Mobile area will be chairmaned by Mr. James Carlin of Catholic Theatre Guild of Mobile. We are most grateful to Mr. Carlin for his generous response to help in this section and wish him all success in his efforts.

STEPPING INTO TV

Immaculate Conception Academy, Davenport, Iowa
Sister Mary Angelita, B.V.M., Director

A major project of the Drama Department has been the addition to the program of television experience over the local station WOC-TV. Beginning with Sunday night commercials for the Sanitone cleaners with two or three students participating each week, it advanced to a preview of the Academy's Annual Style Show with the Drama Department providing some of the models and the narration. A half hour Christmas program followed which featured Charles Tazewell's "The SMALL ONE," presented by Jean Barrett.

OVERTONES, which won a superior rating at the Dubuque and Iowa City Play Festivals in 1952, was given during the Christmas holidays. In the immediate future IDOLS, which won the same recognition in the 1953 Dubuque festival and a special verse choir program will be presented.

* * *

Regis High School, Eau Claire, Wisconsin

Betsy Kranzfelder, secretary of Regis Players, reports: "Regis Players presented BOX AND COX, a farce in one act on the local television station, WEAU, in January. This play merited a top rating at the state play contest.

The dramatics department, under the direction of Sister M. Janet, O.S.B., will present one TV program a month.

HIGH SCHOOL THEATRE

Because of the large number of new members, many of whom have only recently learned of CTC, we are offering you this brief history of the Conference. The information was compiled and written by Sister M. Xavier, B.V.M. of Clarke College.

In an article written for "America," December 5, 1936, Emmet Lavery voiced the hope of many Catholic drama enthusiasts for the coordination of existing groups into a national organization. Mr. Lavery's article aroused the interest of two men in Chicago: Rev. George A. Dinneen, S.J., Pastor of St. Ignatius Church, and Mr. Charles Costello, Director of the Loyola Community Theatre in that parish. These men had also long dreamed of a National Catholic Theatre, and Mr. Lavery's article provided the impetus for realizing this dream.

On January 13, 1937, less than a month after Mr. Lavery's article appeared in "America," the directors of the Loyola Community Theatre issued an invitation to directors of Catholic Theatre groups to attend the first National Catholic Theatre Conference to be held June 15-16. In the same year, strangely enough, another group interested itself independently in a plan to form a Catholic Theatre Conference. The Blackfriars Guild, headed by Rev. Urbana Nagle, O.P., proposed that a National convention be held at the Catholic University of America on August 7-8, 1937. Father Nagle, like Fr. Dinneen and Mr. Costello, had been moved to action by Mr. Lavery's article. Mr. Lavery was unaware of Fr. Nagle's project when he formulated the plans for the Chicago meeting in June. To this first convention came 416 delegates from 28 states. One of the principal achievements of the first conference was the formation of a tentative organization with temporary offices. Permanent officers were elected at the Washington meeting, and seven permanent committees appointed: Play Listing, World Theatre, Parish, College, High School, and Grammar School Theatre, Playwriting, Motion Picture, Publicity for Catholic Press, Publicity for the Secular Press.

By September, 1937 a central office for the Conference was established at the Catholic University. Copies of the Bulletin, official publication of C.T.C., reached members and prospective members from this office. During the first year of its existence the Conference had few members outside of those who attended the conventions at Chicago and Washington. By February, 1938, however, interest in the movement had spread and 235 individual memberships and 128 group memberships were reported. This count represented 35 states and 6 Canadian areas.

As the Conference grew it became necessary to divide the members into regions so that better regional meeting of CTC was held jointly by Clarke and Loras Colleges in Dubuque, January 30 to February 1, 1942. Other regions followed with their own conventions. Perhaps the greatest contribution of the Regional Conventions came during World War II when national conventions were impossible. By means of local meetings and play festivals the spirit of CTC was kept active and membership was substantially increased during a period when the Conference could easily have been dissolved.

A study of the history and development of the Catholic Theatre Conference shows a substantial increase in membership. Over 300 production groups representing at least 6,000 members participate directly in the work of the Conference. A widening of geographic distribution has also been achieved. At the first Convention 26 states were represented; now 39 send delegates, and so do Canada, Mexico, New South Wales, Australia, and England. The greatest numerical growth within a single group came with the increased number of high schools: these grew from 4 memberships in 1941 to 202 in 1950.

The self sacrificing spirit of the CTC leaders during the 16 years the Conference has been in existence cannot be praised too highly. In these men and women we see exemplified the favorite motto of Fr. Dinneen, one of the founders of the Conference: "A great deal of good can be done if we don't pay too much attention to who gets the credit."

You learn to stay in character by staying in character. If you want to be able to stay in character throughout the play the night of production, learn to stay in character throughout the rehearsal. If you are talking over the last football game one minute, and trying to jump into character the next minute, your portrayal will be like a flower which has been transplanted too many times: it will never grow roots.

Did you ever try a scavenger hunt to help collect properties? One clever director gathered his group for an evening of fun, and then, giving them each a list of part of the properties, he sent them out to find them. They were asked not to bring in the properties, but to locate them, and to get permission to use them when the time came. In less than two hours, all the properties for a difficult production were located.

CROSS - COUNTRY CIRCUIT

HIGH SCHOOL

Marquette High School, Alton, Ill.
Mother M. Gregory, O.S.U., Director

"We started the year with the one-act PARADE AT THE DEVIL'S BRIDGE, followed by participation in the West-Central Regional Festival with a cutting from FATHER OF THE BRIDE. Now we are working on the operetta ROBIN HOOD which will be presented before Lent."

Alvernia High School, Chicago, Illinois
Anna Helen Reuter, Drama Director

Alvernia High School will present THE GRASS HARP by Truman Capote on April 24, 25, 27, 28, 29, 30, May 1 and 2 at 8:15 p.m. There will be a matinee for religious at 2 p.m. on Saturday, May 1.

Girls' Central High School, Butte, Montana

Sister Seraphim, Director, writes: "Our tribute to Mary at the opening of her Marian Year was a presentation of THE JOYFUL HOUR by the Chorus and Speech groups. In January we did THE CURIOUS SAVAGE and then followed with an original play based on Polish history entitled THE HEYNAL.

Providence High School, Chicago, Ill.
Therese Marie Cuny, Director

The new comedy MATILDA by Ira Avery will be given on April 22, 23, 24, 25, 27, 30, and May 2. Boys from Mel's, St. Phillip's, and De LaSalle high schools will take part in this production which will be the first in the middle-west. A special performance for religious will be given on Saturday, May 1.

St. Agnes Academy, Houston, Texas

The Junior Class presented THE GYPSY TROUBADOUR, an operetta, in early January.

Academy of the Holy Angels, Minneapolis, Minn.
Sister M. Charitas, Director

An assembly program in honor of Our Lady was given by fifty of the Freshman Speech Group. In February, Sophomores presented LET'S GET TOGETHER, a musical footnote to history in one act, written by Father D. A. Lord, S.J.

Mother of Mercy High School, Cincinnati, Ohio
Sister Mary Carlos, R.S.M., Drama Director

The senior class of Mother of Mercy High School presented THE YOUNG AND FAIR on February 19 and 21.

Our Lady of Victory Academy, Ft. Worth, Texas
Sister Marie Therese, Director

In February, the Genesian Players presented the three-act comedy JENNY KISSED ME.

Academy of Our Lady, (Longwood), Chicago, Ill.
Therese Marie Cuny, Director

SEVEN MIRRORS will be presented on April 3, 9, 10, and 11. Boys from Leo, De LaSalle, Rita's and Mendel high schools will play the male rôles. A special matinee for religious will be given on April 10.

Immaculata High School, Chicago, Ill.
Anna Helen Reuter, Drama Director

Twelve student-directed one-act plays will be presented on the afternoon and evening of Sunday, March 21. The three plays with highest scores will be given for the student body the following Tuesday. Awards will be made to the director of the winning play and the actresses best portraying a leading role and a supporting role.

Mount Marty High School
Yankton, South Dakota

On February 19 the Mount Marty High School Players' Club produced A. A. Milne's THE IVORY DOOR. Sister Marie, O.S.B. directed the play and Sister M. Jeanne, O.S.B. was technical director.

Marywood Academy, Grand Rapids, Michigan
Sister Mary Aline, O.P.

MADONNA OF THE ROSE and AT THE FEET OF THE MADONNA were recent productions in celebration of the Marian Year. Currently, the Academy players are presenting SNOW WHITE AND THE SEVEN DWARFS.

Los Angeles Catholic Girls High School
"THE MASQUE OF THE TWO STRANGERS" was the presentation of the Masquers and Sandalers at the Drama Festival held at Immaculate Heart College on February 26, 27, and 28.

St. Mel High School, Chicago, Ill.
Gerald Sullivan, Director

The Meldramatic Club presented BILLY BUDD in late February.

Aquinas High School, LaCrosse, Wisc.
Sister M. Theodata, Director

In celebration of the Marian Year, the Aquinas Players presented THE SONG OF BERNADETTE on February 21 and 22.

St. Boniface High School, Coldspring, Minn.
Sister M. Michaela, O.S.B., Director

A highly successful performance of MURDER IN THE NUNNERY was reported by the Drama department in early February.

Edgewood High School, Madison, Wisc.

On March 25, the thespians of the school will present SONG OF BERNADETTE to honor Our Lady during her Marian Year.

FESTIVAL PLAY PRODUCTION SHEET

Title: A CROWN FOR MARY

Author: May Howley Barry

Evaluation:

Confidence in prayer and devotion to the Blessed Mother are very effectively brought out in this little play making it particularly suitable for a May program. The roles of the fourteen year old crippled girl and the elderly Mrs. Maguire offer splendid opportunities for characterization.

Synopsis:

Margaret, a fourteen year old crippled orphan confides to Mrs. Maguire, an elderly neighbor, that she has been praying to the Blessed Mother to be adopted.. She is absolutely confident that by the end of May someone will come to take her. When Mrs. Harkness, a desolate young mother, embittered by the loss of her baby girl, wanders unwittingly into the orphanage garden, Margaret very artlessly announces that she is for adoption and can do many things despite her crippled condition. Sister Agnes, in charge of the orphans, tries to console Mrs. Harkness reminding her that everything that happens to us is in God's plan. Margaret then suggests that Tommy, a little two year old, would be a nice baby for Mrs. Harkness. When Sr. Agnes remarks that Tommy needs a mother, Margaret very wistfully adds, "Everybody needs a mother." Whereupon Mrs. Harkness replies, "Not you, Margaret. You will never need anything. God has given you His greatest gift - Faith. But there is a mother who needs you. Would you like to come to her?" And thus Mary answers Margaret's earnest prayer.

Production Notes:

Characters	5 female characters - one of which is a life-size statue of the Blessed Virgin with no lines - no action.
Set	Garden of an orphanage. Two garden benches and a low pedestal for Mary are all that are necessary for an effective presentation.
Costumes	Modern - one Religious habit (any Community)
Publisher	The Dramatic Publishing Company
Running Time	Approximately 25 minutes.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS
JANUARY 1, 1900
TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
FROM THE FACULTY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
SIR:
We have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 29th inst. and in reply to inform you that the same has been forwarded to the proper authorities for their consideration.

Very respectfully,
Yours truly,
The Faculty of the University of Chicago

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS
JANUARY 1, 1900
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CROSS-COUNTRY CIRCUIT

COMMUNITY THEATRE

News items from the South are too few but when they do come, they literally puff with enthusiasm and activity. Our entire Community Theatre section this month is devoted to that part of the country.

Trucks of scenery, properties, and two cars to carry the cast journeyed from Mobile, Alabama to Dallas, Texas to carry the Catholic Theatre Guild's production of **BLACK HATE** to that city. This version of **MEDEA** was directed and staged by John Heald. Requests to bring the play to other areas had to be turned down because of a heavy rehearsal schedule. **A SLEEP OF PRISONERS** by Christopher Fry demanded their attention in order to be ready for presentation during Lent.

The Guild also offers a half-hour Drama presentation each week over WKRK.

A musical comedy is slated for April. It will be an original based on the story of the LaFite brothers.

As if all that were not sufficient, the members also sandwich in **THE AZALEA CITY JAMBOREE**. Did someone say "those slow, leisurely Southerners"? They are already casting about for a special Marian Year production for October 1954. It all leaves us a little breathless!

The Catholic Theatre Guild of Northern Kentucky sends a very attractive program called **SPOTLIGHT** which covers the events leading to the celebration of their 15th anniversary. The event itself was featured by a presentation of **THE CHOCOLATE SOLDIER** in February. The plays and musicals of the past give evidence of variety and good taste.

The Guild has also given Christmas programs in downtown Covington, sponsored by the Retail Merchants Association, has played for orphanages of the vicinity, and contributed to the poor through benefit performances.

Its latest activity is the Guild library which is fast accumulating books on the subject of Theatre.

Congratulations to this fine group on 15 years of achievement! May the next 15 bring you continued blessing and success!

The Catholic Theatre Guild of Richmond, Virginia is another group with a schedule that must measure seconds, it seems! During the past five years, they have produced four major plays and the annual Passion Play each year. But the productions on-stage are only a part of the story. The spirit and enthusiasm of its players is obviously part of the reason for their success. Mrs. Frances Dee Antonelli is the director of the current Passion Play. Reverend John P. Hannan is the Moderator.

CHILDREN'S THEATRE

Clarke College Children's Theatre (Dubuque, Iowa) presented **RUMPELSTILTSKIN** in the latter part of February.

COLLEGE and UNIVERSITY

Clarke College (Dubuque, Ia.) produced **THE FEARLESS ONE** by Bernanos as a book-in-hand presentation in January.

Girls from the Drama department played the women's roles in Loras College recent production of **HAMLET**.

A variety show called **MISSION MADCAPS** was also a recent feature of the Drama department. Sister M. Xavier, B.V.M. is in charge of the department.

Nazareth College (Nazareth, Ky.) celebrated the Centenary of their Sodality with a pageant entitled **FOR OUR QUEEN**. It was written by Sister Margaret Maria, S.C.M. and directed by Sister Patricia Ann.

OUR LADY OF LOURDES will be presented by the college in March.

Loyola University (Los Angeles, Calif.) will present **THE VAGABOND KING** in late Spring. Ted DeLay is the director. Early plans give evidence of this becoming one of the most colorful and entertaining of the musicals which have become a feature of the University's yearly program.

Incarnate Word College (San Antonio, Texas) will present **SONG OF BERNADETTE** in March. Sister M. Helene Probst is directing the production.

The Ardeleons of College of St. Benedict (St. Joseph, Minn.) are producing **DEAR BRUTUS** in late Spring. Sister Marcine, O.S.B. is director.

College of New Rochelle (New York) presented **THE GOOD-NATURED MAN** by Oliver Goldsmith in February. Edgar L. Klotten was director.

The Genesians of OLV Junior College in Ft. Worth presented Jean Kerr's **JENNY KISSED ME** on Feb. 26 and 28th. The male roles were played by Catholic air-men from nearby Carswell Air Base and by Senior Catholic Youth members.

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THIS 'N THAT

Albert McCleery, one of the Chicago Drama Festival's most dynamic critic-judges, and now one of the executive producers at N.B.C., bellows in favor of TV arena-style or close-up staging. "The arena technique isn't monotonous, as some critics contend. Good decor can heighten a good script, but it can't save a poor one. So why spend the money on scenery when you can spend it on good writers?" (Reprinted from New York Times, Nov. 8, 1953). Read the complete article.

Mr. Joseph Rice (Immaculate Conception College, Los Angeles) reports that he and Emmet Lavery will soon be ready with a new version of SEVEN MIRRORS. The revisions are planned in order to bring the action up to date, applying situations to world affairs of 1954.

The AETA and University Productions, Inc. have developed a plan to give writers a market for their work. While they are interested in any theatrical material, they are especially anxious to procure material for TV shows of half-hour duration. The shows will be commercially produced with the writer retaining regular rights and privileges of professional writers. Material should be sent to Russell A. Hickson, 208 Manhattan Beach Blvd., Manhattan, Calif. This is not an inter-collegiate contest. It is an effort to gain commercial material from new writers. Further details can be had by writing to our secretarial office or direct to Mr. Hickson.

Are there any members who have pictures that were taken during the Denver convention? Even if they are "snaps," Father Herbst would greatly appreciate it if you would send them to him. He would like pictorial representation of the convention in the Yearly Bulletin and, while there are some on hand, he believes that there are many other interesting pictures that could be added.

We are adding to our library three short and simple-to-produce sketches that will be an answer to those groups wishing to do something to feature the Marian Year with other than a three-act play. They are:

THE WOMAN OF PROMISE, a miniature pageant in honor of Our Lady.

THE PLEA FROM FATIMA
QUEEN OF AMERICA

The latter uses Verse Choir. These are published by the Queen's Work Press.

The Catholic Broadcasters Association lists the following new scripts:

CARLOS OF LEPANTO — 15 minutes — 4 men.

THERESITA AND THE PETALS — 25 minutes
4 men, 6 female, concerning the appearance of Our Lady at Lipa.

ARCHANGEL AND THE MAIDEN — 15 minutes
3 male, 3 female, story of the Annunciation.

OUR LADY OF LA SALETTE — 15 minutes — 5 female, narration — dramatization of events at La Salette.

Mary Productions lists two stage plays (also adaptable to TV or Radio) that may be an answer to what to produce during the Marian Year. Both are full-length.

STAR ON THE MOUNTAIN — 2 sets, 9 characters. This is the story of LaSalette.

SECRET OF MARY — 10 characters. Theme is the life and trials of St. Louis de Monfort.

"THE MOST IMPORTANT ONE"

In the January issue of the Calendar, we called attention to a skit called "The Most Important One." It was written by Peggy Sadler of Incarnate Word College (San Antonio, Texas) for the purpose of rousing students to the real needs of Catholic Theatre and the part that the Conference plays in this need. Thoughtful, cleverly written, and interesting, the skit can be produced very easily and plays about 15 minutes. It is good material for Drama club meetings, for regional conventions, or for any theatrical get-together. It is excellent for an all-student assembly to acquaint them with their obligations as an audience.

Copies have been made available. You need only write and we'll be glad to send a copy.

FIRST SUNDAY

Are you remembering that the first Sunday of every month is "our Sunday"? Across the country, we should all ask a rain of blessing on our work and on the furtherance of CTC aims on this day, set aside for special remembrance at Holy Mass and Communion. We can't be gathered together in body but in spirit and in His name we can, and should be, each first Sunday of the month.

AN EASIER WAY!

We have noticed that many directors still install phones in the rear of the auditorium, connecting with the backstage switchboard. This of course, eliminates shouting and walking back and forth to talk to light crew. But few have thought of placing the phone directly outside the doors leading into the Auditorium where (if the door is glass or if a small glass panel can be inserted) it will be possible for the director to converse with the backstage crew easily and correct lighting effects from out front. The usual position of the phone near the last row means either such a muffling of voice that the crew cannot get directions clearly, or the director's voice disturbingly carries through the auditorium causing annoyance to those nearby. However, when you are out in the foyer, looking through a glass panel, you can talk at length and as often as you wish.

For even greater convenience, you can have two outlets for the cord so that during rehearsals you can plug in phone while seated in rear rows of the auditorium, but on production nights the phone can be plugged into the foyer area outside the theatre itself but within view of the stage.

BROADWAY IN REVIEW

ONDINE. Giraudoux' version of de la Motte Fouquet's famous German fairy tale, *Undine*, has been adapted with Valency's usual skill and the hapless water-sprite is given the enchantment of Audrey Hepburn's piquant grace. Mel Ferrer as the knight errant heads a very accomplished cast. Directed by Alfred Lunt with fabulous costumes designed by Richard Whorf and incidental music by Virgil Thomson, *ONDINE* is a delight. At the Forty-sixth St.

THE CAINE MUTINY COURT MARTIAL. Although the picture of the U.S.S. Minesweeper Caine can't be shown on the stage, Mr. Wouk, with the help of Charles Laughton, seems to have made the background apparent to those who haven't read the book. For those who have, the characters are just exactly right. Lloyd Nolan triumphs as Captain Queeg, John Hodiak is Lieutenant Maryk and Henry Fonda is Maryk's counsel, Lieutenant Greenwald of the Air Force. No sets are necessary to quicken the intensity of the action. At the Plymouth.

THE CONFIDENTIAL CLERK. Using a farcical plot of changeling children — who are also illegitimate — as a basis for a study of the relationships of children to parents, T. S. Eliot has written sagely and wittily but without the dramatic tension of *THE COCKTAIL PARTY*. Ina Claire's art makes a minor character the most effective; Claude Rains is prosaic; Douglas Watson smug but Joan Greenwood has a mannered fascination and the clerk is excellent. At the Morosco.

OH, MEN! OH WOMEN! The humors of the psycho-analytical couch have now been exploited by Edward Chodorov and very funny they are. Betsy von Fuerstenberg is the fiancée of the doctor who seems to accomplish so little for his patients and is played by Franchot Tone. Morals are the least of anyone's worries in the comedy. At the Henry Miller.

THE IMMORALIST. Mr. and Mrs. Goetz have adapted Andre Gide's novel and Billy Rose has produced it. It is a stark tragedy sensitively played by Louis Jourdain and Geraldine Page and treats a repellent subject with dignity and some compassion. Far superior in this respect to *TEA AND SYMPATHY*. At the Royale.

LULLABY. Mary Boland returns in a farce which is a combination of morality, vulgarity and thoroughly American humor. At the Lyceum.

ALMANAC. The late John Murray Anderson's swan song is an uneven revue with Hermione Gingold (from London) who appears in sketches that are sometimes dull and sometimes very funny. Orson Bean, a promising comedian, has poor material and the general atmosphere is supersophisticated and suggestive. A negro singer, Harry Belafonte is the tops. At the Imperial.

HIS AND HERS. Commonplace comedy with Celeste Holm and Robert Preston. At the 48th St.

THE WINNER. Elmer Rice's latest drama about a cigarette girl who is 'engaged' to a well married man, becomes involved with a second and is rescued by a third. Joan Tetzel is as vivacious and pretty as she is insincere and Tom Helmore as the blase but decent young lawyer runs away with the proceedings

— and the girl. At the Playhouse.

THE REMARKABLE MR. PENNYPACKER. Burgess Meredith makes his Victorian hero quite plausible about his remarkable 'secret' but what that is one can't divulge without ruining a pleasant comedy on an unusual theme. At the Coronet.

THE GIRL ON THE VIA FLAMINIA. Staged in the round this is a cruel and pretty raw tragedy of our troops in Italy. Extraordinarily well staged and acted, it is far closer to the novel it seems than the picture called *ACT OF LOVE*. There is no love in this. At Circle-in-the-Square.

NEW ADDITIONS TO LIBRARY

TO LIVE IN PEACE — Play in 3 Acts
By Victor Rieti from Italian of G. Forzano

This is a charming study of Don Geronimo, the parish priest of a very small Italian village near Siena in the year 1804.

High in the mountains, neither Don Geronimo or his flock know anything about the outside world and the old Corsican pastor had nearly forgotten that he has a nephew named Napoleone, when a General and military escort arrive to take Don Geronimo to Paris for the Emperor's Coronation, with the promise of a Cardinal's hat.

Don Geronimo instead of accepting the invitation at once asks for a night to think it over and during that time he has ample proof of what worldliness can do to simple people. What will cause objections to the play over here is that a Franciscan Friar comes to ask Don Geronimo's intercession with the French as his Monastery has allowed the English to make gunpowder in their cellars. He also alludes to a statue of San Rocco which made money for them by moving its eyes. This certainly should be cut out. In fact it would be better to eliminate the Friar completely, as he is not essential.

Otherwise, the play offers excellent characterizations; has a love interest and plenty of action and offers an unusually tempting part in Don Geronimo. It has one set but the uniforms of the French would have to be rented.

This play was successfully presented over TV early in the year.

THE FILLY-LOO BIRD
Musical Fantasy in five scenes by Frank Caden
Music by Helen Steele

It is hard to judge this without hearing the musical score but if it is good, it will compensate for the story which seems always to be straining for something extra imaginative. The characters are hill-billies except for a visiting Englishwoman and her two children. The Filly-Loo bird turns into a young man at the end and comforts the girl who has been chasing the hero unsuccessfully through the five scenes. There is, of course, a square dance scene but all the scenes need cutting badly. Probably this is better than the average High School musical — but again much depends upon the music.

1954 ANNUAL (continued)

A list of patrons will also be included in the pages of the Annual. Listing as a patron will be \$5.00.

May we suggest that you acquaint your students with news of the forthcoming Annual. Many of the directors stated that, in past years, their students were most anxious to secure Annuals. A few used them as a basis for discussion in Drama classes.

The form below should be sent in with the article, picture, and advertisements not later than April 1st. Mail all material to

Reverend C. Herbst, C.M.
St. Thomas Seminary
Denver, Colorado

No bulletins will be sent out unless check has been received for the number of copies ordered. We trust our members will recognize the necessity of this procedure. The heavy expenditure incurred in printing, handling, and mailing make this imperative. We lean heavily on your cooperation and your understanding in helping to make this project a success, not just for this year, but to insure its continuance in the future.

Each group will, we know, want to be represented in this account of the year's activities. Don't delay in getting material together. Don't neglect to offer that needed help toward making the 1954 Annual a really wonderful display of Catholic Theatre. During this Marian year, what better way to show the world our love and devotion to Mary than the account of our efforts in Catholic-Action through Catholic Theatre. There will be no follow-up material on this project; no further reminders. We are confident that you will do your part!

Please send.....copies of the 1954 Yearly Bulletin to

Enclosed please find check for \$..... for which \$..... covers cost of cut, and \$..... covers purchase of Annuals.

THE PLAY FESTIVAL (continued)

Still another reason for liking the Play Festival is the fun and recreation it provides. Gaiety and good times are connected with the work and serious problems. With no auditorium nor definite stage equipment we have had to laugh the difficulties away as we approached Shakespeare.

"Shakespeare?" you question. Yes, we dared do it, and now after four years we are planning to do it again. No festival made such a universal appeal to audience nor cast as did the work of the Bard. Included in those approving and whole-heartedly co-operating, are the teachers, particularly those of the English Department.

An added benefit derived is the valuable critical experience gained. Rating sheets are passed out in the school. The faculty and two students from each grade form a Board of Judges.

Truly, this is an activity that has paid big dividends for the faith and confidence we have placed in the girls. Time and again they have demonstrated, that given the opportunity, they would more than surprise us with the ability and creative imagination endowed upon them by God.

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